

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Mayor Becky Ames, the 41st mayor of Beaumont, Texas.

Since being elected, Mayor Becky Ames has spearheaded several initiatives to better the Beaumont area, such as establishing the One Stop Shop in city hall to help businesses and homeowners with their various needs.

Becky has also helped develop the 311 call centers to help residents with non-emergency issues.

Mayor Ames' most significant contributions to our district include the emergency preparation and management before and after several tropical storms and hurricanes that have impacted Beaumont. Mayor Ames' experience and leadership during these storms were instrumental to recovery efforts and restoring Beaumont's infrastructure. I have seen them up close and personal.

I recognize and I thank Mayor Becky Ames for her many years of selfless service to Beaumont and our 14th Congressional District of Texas.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Becky on her well-earned retirement.

RECOGNIZING SHERIFF CRAIG NOBLES

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sheriff Craig Nobles of Long County, Georgia, for his heroic actions saving 22 dogs on May 24, 2021.

Sheriff Nobles was responding to a brush fire and discovered 22 dogs tied to trees in the wood line. After containing the scene, first responders successfully saved all 22 dogs that are now safe and healthy.

The First Congressional District is fortunate to have Sheriff Nobles serving and protecting not only the people in the community, but man's best friend as well.

After seeing the faces of the 22 dogs, I am thankful for the first responders who rescued these dogs that are now able to find a loving home.

I am proud to rise today to congratulate Sheriff Nobles, the Long County Sheriff's Office, and the Long County Fire Department for their great work in saving these precious animals.

RECOGNIZING CHASE GROGAN

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, recently, my friend Jean Donaldson was driving home late one afternoon and had a tire blow out.

Jean stopped in the parking lot of the business Clean & Dry, where Chase Grogan, an employee of the business, noticed her plight and offered to help.

Despite it being near quitting time, Chase insisted on helping Jean and pro-

ceeded to change her tire so that she could get home. Jean was, of course, grateful and offered compensation, which he declined.

We often come to the floor to praise people who have done extraordinary acts, and we should continue to do that. However, it is good for us to acknowledge all the Chase Grogans of the world who, every day, do extraordinary acts of kindness with little recognition.

By acknowledging Mr. Grogan, we are acknowledging all who do those kindnesses every day.

CONGRATULATING VICKI CHRISTIANSEN

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and congratulate USDA Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen on her recently announced retirement.

Chief Christiansen has dedicated 40 years as a professional forester, wildland firefighter, and land manager.

I have had the great privilege of working with Vicki and appreciated her visit to the Allegheny National Forest.

While visiting, it was made clear her passion for problem-solving, connecting people with their natural resources, and her commitment to local collaboration.

The ANF is Pennsylvania's only national forest, and it plays a vital role in our communities throughout the region.

Vicki's work as USDA Forest Service chief focused on saved natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality for all communities.

Madam Speaker, I thank Vicki Christiansen for her leadership, dedication, passion, and advocacy for our Nation's national forests in rural areas. May she enjoy her retirement.

RECOGNIZING FLAG DAY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, today we celebrate the adoption of the stars and stripes as the official flag of our Nation. In 1777, six years before the end of the Revolutionary War, is when it was adopted by Congress.

Over the past year, however, we have seen a constant stream of disrespect for our stars and stripes.

We expect the flag to perhaps be beaten and burned on the streets of Beijing or in the Middle East or other cities of our global adversaries, but we do not expect that to happen within the United States.

This past year, we have all fought against the raising of political flags in

military bases and atop our embassies and consulates. Our flag is the only flag that belongs above those buildings.

Our flag is a symbol of hope and unity.

I hope today, of all days, we can remember who fought to raise the flag and why.

REAFFIRMING TRANSATLANTIC SOLIDARITY

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, as co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Ukraine Caucus, I rise to reaffirm transatlantic solidarity in advance of President Biden's meeting with Russian dictator Vladimir Putin.

I am so thankful to President Biden, who is personally committed to liberty in Ukraine. I was proud to travel with him and Senator McCain to Ukraine in 2015, for President Poroshenko's inauguration.

As President Biden knows well, Vladimir Putin is an enemy of liberty. Ukraine faces its seventh year of brutal Russian aggression that has led to over 14,000 deaths. Putin's thugs gunned down liberty defenders like Boris Nemtsov and so many more freedom lovers.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD Amnesty International's deeply troubling human rights report on Russia.

RUSSIA

Russian Federation
Head of state: Vladimir Putin
Head of government: Mikhail Mishustin (replaced Dmitry Medvedev in January)

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed chronic under-resourcing in health care. The authorities used the pandemic as a pretext to continue the crackdown on all dissent, including through amendments to a vaguely worded law on "fake news" and tightening restrictions on public gatherings. Peaceful protesters, human rights defenders and civic and political activists faced arrest and prosecution. Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses intensified. Torture remained endemic, as did near total impunity for perpetrators. The right to a fair trial was routinely violated while legal amendments resulted in a further reduction in judicial independence. Reports of domestic violence rose sharply during COVID-19 lockdown measures, although the draft law on domestic violence remained stalled in Parliament. LGBTI people continued to face discrimination and persecution. Thousands of labour migrants lost their jobs during the pandemic but were unable to leave because of border closures. Evidence emerged to corroborate allegations of war crimes by Russian forces in Syria.

BACKGROUND

The economic downturn, underpinned by falling oil prices, dwindling investment and foreign sanctions, and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, led to a further impoverishment of a growing proportion of the population. Discontent widened, with a slow but steady increase in protests. The government continually faced, and ignored, mounting allegations of corruption at all levels. Measures announced by President Vladimir Putin and his government, like extended fully paid leave for all workers in response to COVID-19, failed to address people's broader concerns.